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19 October 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

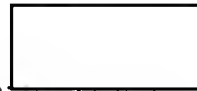
SUBJECT: Proposed "Board of Visitors"

1. After listening to the discussion last evening about the proposed "Board of Visitors", I have had some second thoughts and would like to pass them to you for whatever use they may conceivably have.
2. Since the Doolittle and Clark investigations, the position of the Agency and your own personal standing have been immeasurably strengthened both in Congress and in the Executive elements of the Government. Neither of these investigative groups was able to come up with any findings which gave support to the uninformed criticisms which have been leveled at this organization in the past. In light of this, it seems to me that your best strategy lies in making no moves which could indicate any sense of uncertainty or weakness. Those elements of the Congress which favor a so-called Watch Dog Committee have not picked up any solid or widespread support, and the indications from senior members of both Houses that they want no such Committee is the best evidence that there is little political capital to be made out of such a proposal. A publicly announced "Board of Visitors" might have the merit of constituting "window dressing", as General Doolittle described it, but on the other side of the coin it could well raise questions in the public mind as to why the President felt that such a Board was necessary.
3. It seems to me that by continuing periodic meetings with the Doolittle Group, such as we had last night, you could achieve in large measure the purposes which a "Board of Visitors" would serve and at the same time would obviate the security problems inherent in bringing in additional public citizens to survey the sensitive workings of the Agency. I must say that I am concerned at this date in history over any indications which could be interpreted as a loosening of our security rather than a tightening.
4. In summary, I feel that having run the gauntlet of two intensive, differently sponsored investigations, and having emerged with an unusually clean bill of health, you are entitled to stand firm and let others come to you with any proposals they may have for playing the role of "watch dog". With regular reports to the NSC and with weekly meetings of the IAC, you are under constant scrutiny of the Executive departments on the conduct and performance of your office. For the rest, the world at large will applaud, I believe, your constant assertion of the right

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of secrecy in this type of work. We will always have critics, usually of the kind which cannot be silenced under any circumstances. I do not think that a "Board of Visitors" will do much to mollify those Americans who would like to put us out of business.

5. I have informally discussed with Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Angleton the views that I have set forth above. They have told me that they generally concur and would be glad to have me so state to you.



Richard Helms
Acting Deputy Director (Plans)

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